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THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D. C.
20250-0100

November 12, 2004

Dear Mr. President:

It has been a great honor and distinct privilege to serve you and your Administration as the 27th Secretary of Agriculture.

As I have traveled throughout the country, there is no doubt that your vision and leadership have strengthened our farm economy and reinvigorated America's heartland.

Our nation's diverse farm and food sector is stronger and more vibrant than ever before. Your policies have helped fuel record farm income and provided economic stimulus to rural America. Aggressive trade policies have opened new markets for America's farmers and ranchers, resulting in record farm exports. Today, more conservation tools are available to enhance our nation's natural resources, and your Healthy Forests Initiative is helping prevent devastating wildfires. Under your management agenda, we have improved USDA's operations and delivery of services through E-Government programs.

After the attacks of September 11, 2001, your leadership ensured that actions were taken to better protect the homeland, including our food supply. And, your compassion for others has strengthened our nation's child nutrition programs and helped fight hunger around the world.

Mr. President, we have made great progress during the past four years and I feel now is an appropriate time for me to move on to new opportunities. I will always be thankful and humbled that you entrusted me to serve our nation during these extraordinary times. It is with that same humility that I submit my resignation to you today.

I will be forever grateful for your leadership and friendship. May God continue to bless you and your family, and this great nation that we all love.

With warmest personal regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ann M. Veneman".

Ann M. Veneman